

Fear and Its Remedies

All set for the next terrorist attack? Got your biohazard suit? How 'bout your gas mask, radiation detector and potassium iodide pills? A new store opened in Manhattan recently, only a few blocks from Ground Zero. "Safer America" markets personal safety products for a post-9/11 world.

Work in a high-rise? Have you considered a personal parachute? It comes in two models: the streamlined Executive Chute and the deluxe "HOPE" system (High Office Parachute Escape; opens automatically, good from heights over 100 feet, accommodates persons up to 300 pounds).

Safer America President Harvey Kushner takes a pragmatic approach to homeland security: "These products are no different than safety devices already commonplace in most homes, such as fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, and first-aid kits. We are enabling people to alleviate their fears by doing something smart and productive: preparing to overcome that which they most fear."

Fears abound these days. CIA director George Tenet recently warned Congress that al-Qaida could attack at any time here or abroad. A sampler, from a guy who is privy to more intelligence data than most of us: "Based on what we have learned about the 11 September [attacks], an attempt to conduct another attack on U.S. soil is certain.

"You must make the analytical judgment that the possibility exists that people are planning to attack you inside the United States—multiple simultaneous attacks. We are the enemy, we're the people they want to hurt inside this country," Tenet said.

As Tenet spoke, the nation was still on alert code yellow—"significant risk of terrorist attacks"—because officials had no specific details about time and location of

possible attacks. Frightening times. How should we deal with fear?

We trust military and law enforcement to keep us safe from harm. But we can never completely prepare for every risk in life. And eventually life will end for each of us. What then?

Besides taking reasonable precautions, might it also be worth considering something deeper as an ultimate solution to fear? An Israeli shepherd who became a king knew dangers from wild beasts and wild political enemies who sought his life.

“The Lord is my shepherd,” he wrote. “I have everything I need. Even when I walk through the dark valley of death, I will not be afraid, for you [God] are close beside me. Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me.”

A descendant of this king, Jesus of Nazareth, offered similar advice to His friends: “Don’t be afraid of those who want to kill you. They can only kill your body; they cannot touch your soul. Fear only God,” He taught. God loves people, values them and saves a spot in eternity for those who trust Him.

It’s hard to turn on the news these days without finding cause for fear: terrorism, snipers and financial woes augment personal concerns about relationships, family and job future. Maybe it’s time to look more closely toward One who can calm fears and who holds the future in His hands.